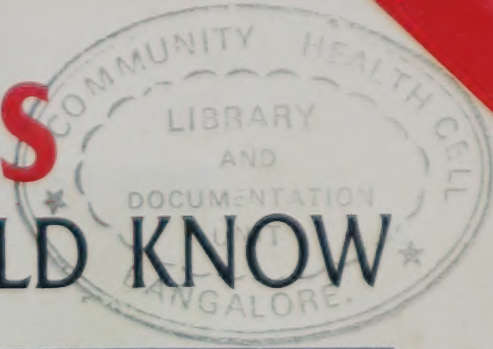


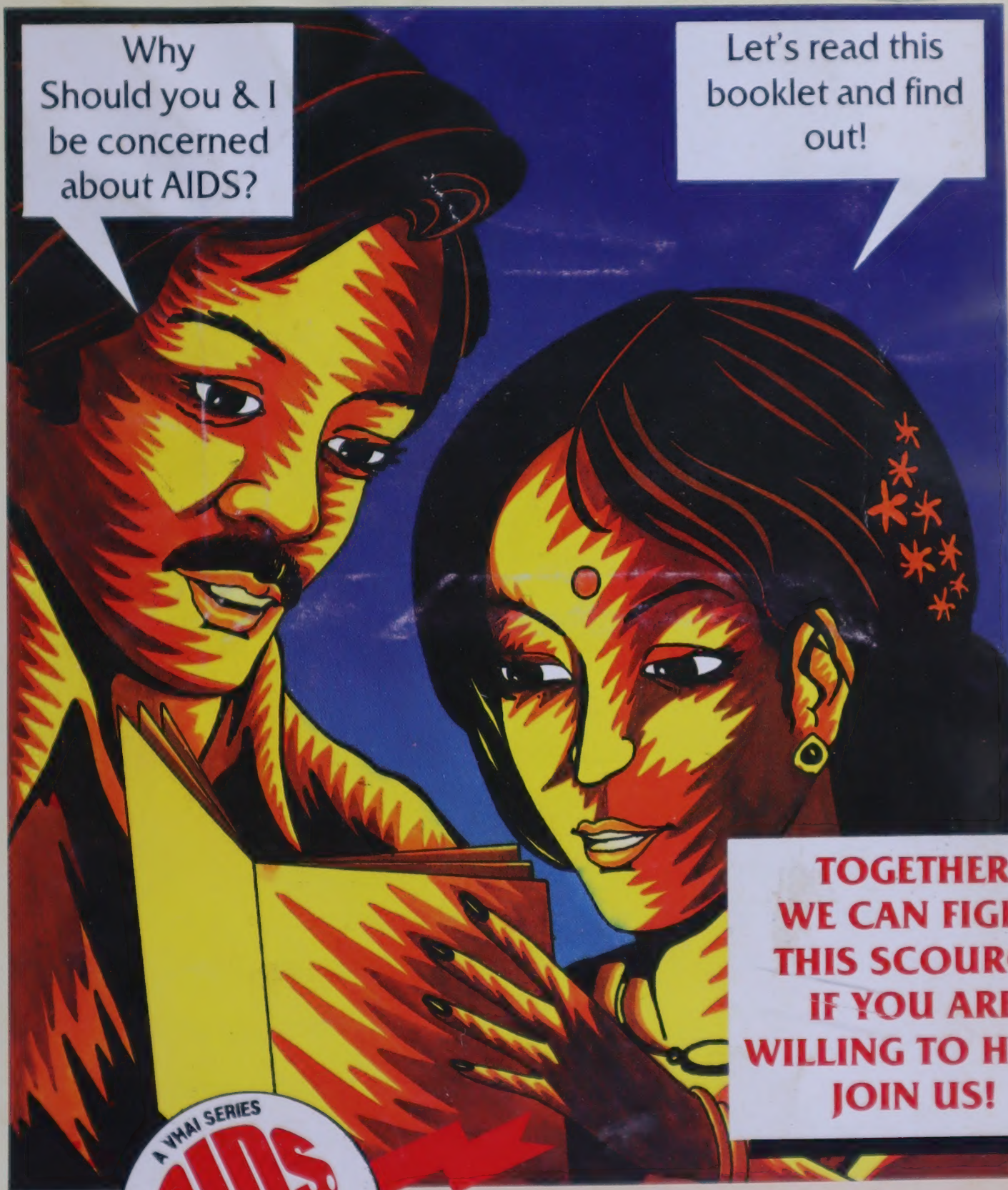
HIV AND AIDS

WHAT EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW



Why
Should you & I
be concerned
about AIDS?

Let's read this
booklet and find
out!



**TOGETHER
WE CAN FIGHT
THIS SCOURGE
IF YOU ARE
WILLING TO HELP,
JOIN US!**



VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

02572



HIV AND AIDS – WHAT EVERYBODY SHOULD KNOW

TEXT	:	DR. P.N. SEHGAL MR. VIKRAMJIT SINGH
DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION	:	STUDIO PROFILE
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FOREWORD

This 'Better Care Series' booklet on HIV AND AIDS has been prepared for every body to know about Human Immuno deficiency Virus (HIV) which causes Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The first case of HIV infection in India was detected in 1986 and since then the infection is spreading not only among the 'high risk behaviour' persons but also among the general population, as seen from the surveillance among antenatal clinic attendants and persons who have received transfusion of blood and blood products in hospitals. It is therefore essential that every body should know the modes of transmission of HIV infection and also how it is not spread.

In the absence of any preventive vaccine and drugs to cure of AIDS, knowledge and awareness among general population about HIV and AIDS, is the main preventive measure available. The Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) is working on this aspect since 1990 and building up trained manpower among NGOs. VHAI intends to bring out a series of such Health Educational material in regional languages to facilitate better understanding of the subject. It is hoped that this booklet will play a useful role.

Alok Mukhopadhyay
Executive Director
VHAI.

10/11/92
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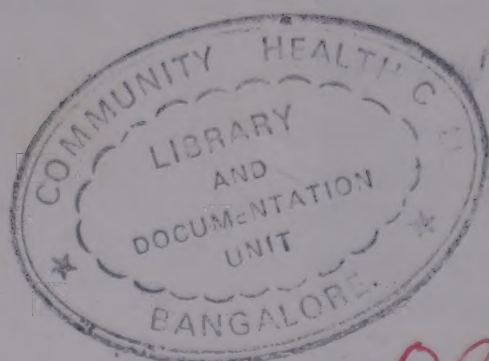
I am thankful to Dr. Mira Shiva, Head, Public Policy Division, Mr. Taposh Roy and Mr. Padam Khanna from the Communication Division for contributing their expertise.

My special thanks are to Mr. Cedric B. Finch and Ms. Manvinder Mamak for their administrative support and particularly to Ms. Mini Sekharan and Virender Rohilla for their secretarial support in preparation of this booklet.

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New Delhi
May 1993.

Dr. P.N. Sehgal



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01 What is AIDS?

It stands for:

A	ACQUIRED
I	IMMUNE
D	DEFICIENCY
S	SYNDROME

AIDS is called ACQUIRED, because it is always caught (become infected) from someone else. IMMUNE DEFICIENCY, because the virus destroys the body's "Protection Mechanism" (Immune System) that fights against diseases and SYNDROME, because this illness has a variety of signs and symptoms.

What is HIV?

It stands for HUMAN IMMUNO-DEFICIENCY VIRUS. It is the name of the Virus that causes AIDS.



HIV looks like this under the microscope

02 Where does HIV live in the body?

HIV lives in the body fluids of the infected person such as SEMEN, VAGINAL SECRETION, BLOOD AND BLOOD PRODUCTS made from infected blood. Though there is evidence of the presence of HIV in tears, sweat and mother's milk, the concentration of HIV is so low that it usually does not infect others.



**REMEMBER
WE CANNOT
TELL WHICH
PEOPLE
HAVE HIV
JUST BY
LOOKING
AT THEM
BUT THEY
CAN STILL
PASS ON
HIV TO
OTHERS**

03 How does HIV enter the body?

(I) Through Unprotected Penetrative Sex:

- You could get infected with HIV if you have sex with an infected man or woman or
- If you have sex with a Commercial Sex Worker (Prostitute) or a man who already has had many sexual partners, or
- If you have sex with many different casual partners, you have a **HIGH CHANCE** of getting infected with HIV or
- You might get infected the very first time you have sex if your partner is already carrying the infection.

(II) Through contaminated Blood and Blood products

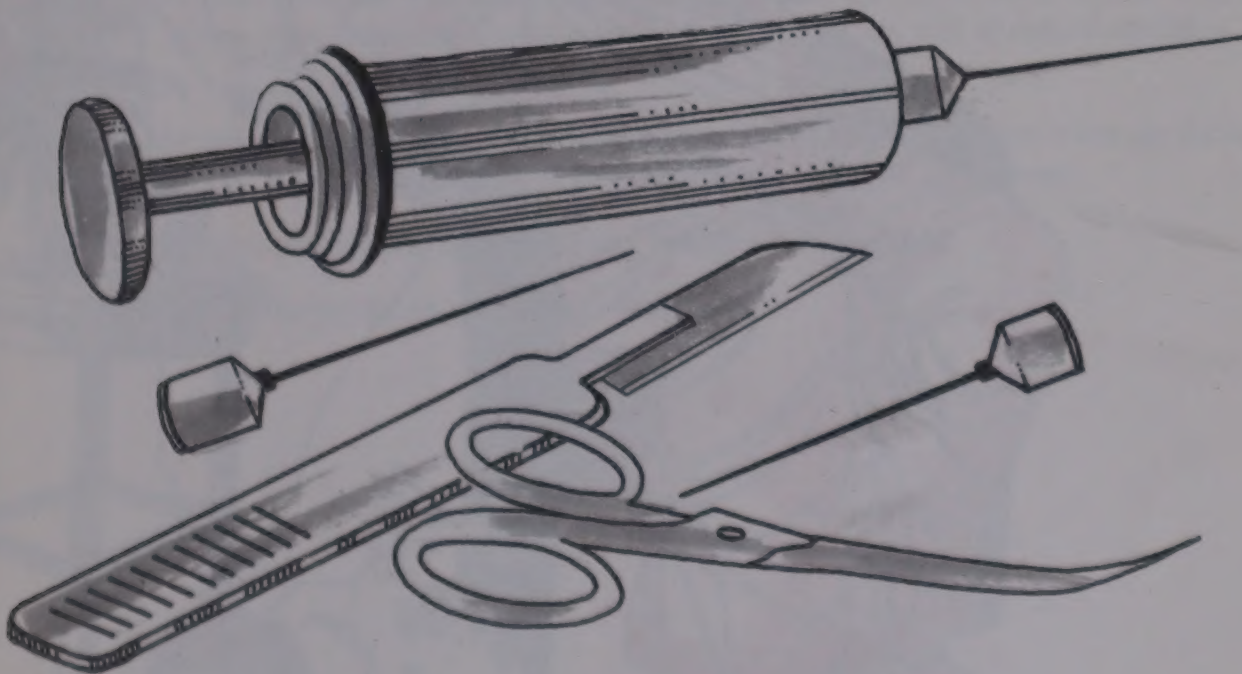
- HIV can enter the body when contaminated blood or blood products which contain HIV is given to a person through blood transfusion, or



- If contaminated injecting equipments are used e.g. by drug users to inject drugs (such as heroin) into their bodies



- HIV can enter the body when medical instruments are not cleaned and sterilised properly
- HIV can also enter the body when sharp tools used to cut the skin (such as ear-piercing and tattoo making) are not cleaned and sterilised properly



(III) Through infected mother to the child:

A pregnant woman who has HIV in her body can pass the infection on to her baby in her womb or during birth.

- Experts are of the opinion that about 1 out of 3 babies born to infected mothers are likely to be born infected with HIV
- There has been evidence that these babies usually do not live longer than two years
- There are very little chances of infected mothers passing on the HIV infection to her child through breast milk. WHO and UNICEF advocate breast feeding in developing countries as the chances of other infections through bottle feeding are much higher



04 But why should I worry about AIDS?

Because

- It is not any more “Not my problem” and HIV/AIDS is spreading fast in all parts of the country
- Neither is it the problem of the Prostitutes and their clients only
- Neither is it the problem of Homosexuals (Gays) alone
- Neither is it the problem of the injecting drug users
- Neither only for those suffering from blood disorders who require frequent transfusions

Many non-high risk behaviour group persons have been detected to be HIV sero-positive, such as pregnant house wives attending ante-natal clinics. Persons with HIV infection develop anti-bodies against HIV in their blood. This can be detected by laboratory examination of the blood. People whose blood show anti-bodies to HIV are called HIV sero-positive.

AIDS is now everyone's problem. What's more, many of us may be exposed to HIV infection unknowingly. However those who are practicing High Risk Behaviour (HRB) are more vulnerable than others for example:

- People who have sex with many different people have a high chance of catching HIV. If you have casual sex even once in a while you are still at risk of catching HIV
- People who have Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) have open sores on their sex organs. It is easier for HIV to enter the body through these sores
- People who share their drug injecting syringes and needles
- People who require frequent blood transfusion

05 Can I identify a person with AIDS?

Unfortunately No!

In the early stage people with HIV infection may look and feel well. They may not even know that they carry HIV in their bodies. But they are capable of spreading the infection to others. In the case of HIV infection in the initial stage an infected person may not be HIV positive but can still pass on the infection to others, through any of the modes of transmission or infection mentioned earlier.

What happens to a person with HIV?

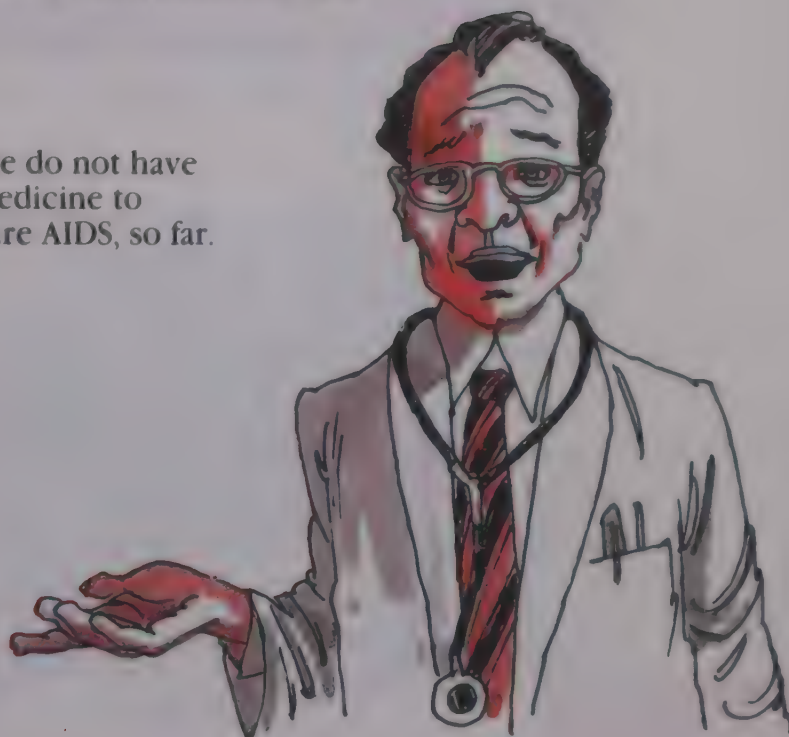
If a person has HIV in the body he/she is called a "HIV Positive Person" and does not automatically mean that he/she has AIDS at that point of time. However, most HIV Positive persons will develop AIDS and eventually die.



Isn't there a cure for AIDS – traditional or allopathic?

NO!

We do not have medicine to cure AIDS, so far.



Though some people have made claims that they have a cure for AIDS, these claims have not been proved.

There is a lot of research going on in many countries to try and find a medicine to cure AIDS. Till a cure is found PREVENTION IS THE ONLY CURE.

Isn't it then very important to know more about HIV and AIDS. Let us know more about HIV and AIDS.

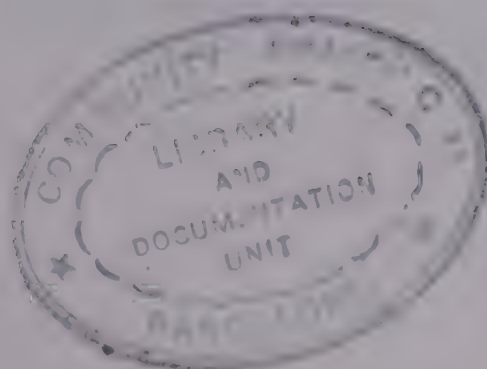
Remember correct information is the only way for prevention. There is no vaccine for prevention. Protect yourself and your loved ones by practicing preventive methods.

**HIV/AIDS
IS NOT
WORTH
THE RISK**

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ACT NOW, KNOW THE FACTS NOT THE MYTHS

AIDS is the condition where the immune system fails to protect our body from infections leaving the body completely defenceless. It is caused by Human Immuno deficiency Virus (HIV). The body thereby succumbs to one or more infections leading to death eventually.

... But don't be afraid. Though HIV is deadly and spreading fast we can control its spread by learning accurate information. We all need to understand AIDS, so as to choose low-risk behaviour to prevent it and to stop unnecessarily being afraid of getting AIDS through casual, everyday contacts.

By learning the facts about HIV/AIDS we will be able to protect ourselves and others from the risk of acquiring it.

**AIDS MAY
BE DEADLY
AND
SPREADING
BUT THE
GOOD
NEWS IS
THAT IT IS
PREVENTABLE**



06 You can not get HIV/AIDS from:

Scientific evidence shows that unlike many other viruses such as the common cold, the HIV does not spread through casual everyday contact. That means you are not at risk through:

Normal social contact:

HIV is not spread during casual, social situations such as touching, handshaking, talking to someone or living with a relative in the same house or sitting next to someone in a crowded bus or train.

In the workplace:

You don't have to worry about getting HIV from a colleague or co-worker by touching or being near to him or her. There is no evidence that the virus is spread by sharing equipments like telephone, typewriter, books, pen, computers and other similar items.

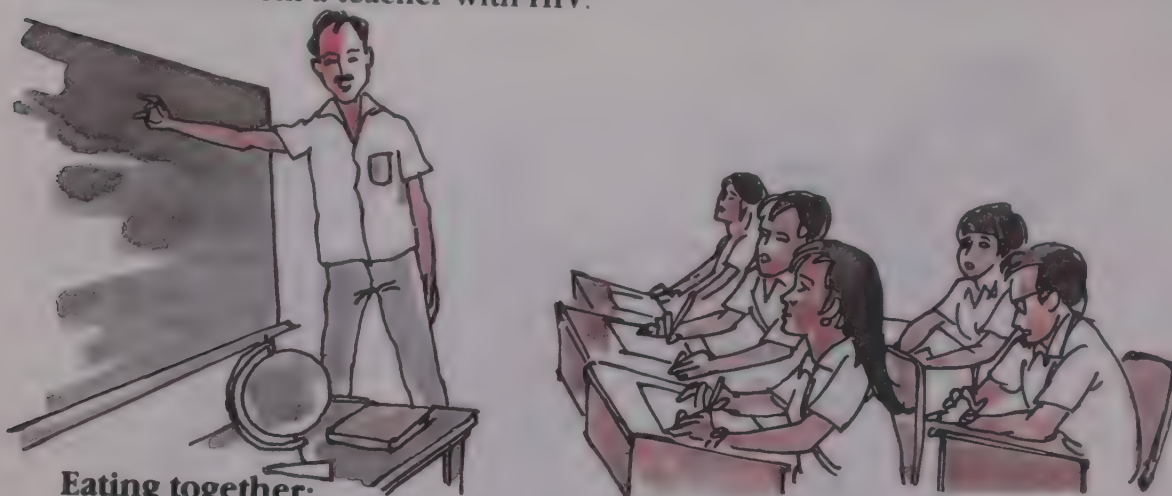
**Playing together:**

Scientists believe that the amount of HIV present in sweat or tears is so low that it is not enough to infect you.



In the classroom:

It is natural to feel protective about our children. But there is no scientific evidence that they can get HIV at school by sitting near or playing with a child who has HIV or from a teacher with HIV.



Eating together:

There is no evidence that HIV is transmitted through sharing of food, drinks, plates, glasses and similar other items. You don't have to worry for example if a waiter or a cook has HIV.



Sharing toilets and latrines:

HIV is not spread through toilet seats, wash-basins, bath tubs or swimming pools.



Coughing or sneezing:

HIV is not spread through the air.



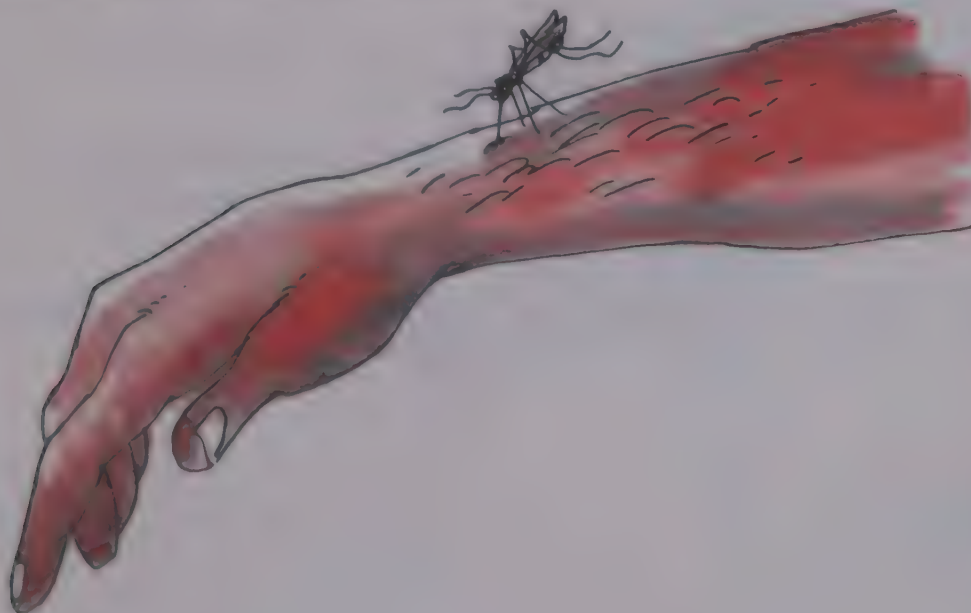
Hand shakes, hugging or kissing:

HIV is not spread through social contacts like hand shaking, embracing, hugging and normal kissing.



Insect bites:

HIV is not spread by mosquitoes, bed bugs or other insects. Though these insects suck blood, the HIV dies quickly when it enters the body of these insects and thus it cannot pass it on to another person.



07 What happens to a person infected with HIV?

The body of the healthy person is well protected by a strong defence system which fights off harmful infections.

.... But in an HIV infected person:

HIV weakens and destroys the defence system of the body and because the body then has no protection, many other illnesses make the person very sick and eventually the person dies.

In the early stage....

Many people with HIV infection look healthy and feel well. They may not even know that they are carrying HIV in their bodies though they are capable of infecting others.

.... But after some years

Most HIV Positive Persons go on to develop AIDS as their immune system becomes severely weakened. Normally mild diseases turn into fatal diseases.

For clinical definition of AIDS in adults there must be at least two major signs with at least one minor sign and the absence of known causes of immuno-suppression.

Clinical Case Definition of AIDS in Adults

Major signs:

- Weight loss, at least 10 per cent body weight
- Chronic diarrhoea, for more than one month
- Prolonged fever, for more than one month (intermittent or constant)

Minor signs:

- Persistent cough, more than one month
- Generalised puritic dermatitis (general skin disease/infection)
- An episode of herpes zoster (viral infection)
- Oro-pharyngeal candidiasis (fungus infection in mouth and throat)
- Chronic progressive and disseminated herpes simplex infection
- Generalised lymphadenopathy (enlargement of lymph glands)

The presence of generalised Kaposi's Sarcoma or Cryptococcal meningitis are sufficient by themselves for the diagnosis of AIDS in adults.

Clinical Case Definition of AIDS in Children

The major and minor signs in paediatric age groups are mentioned below. There should be absence of known cause of immuno suppression (such as malnutrition) and the presence of at least two of the major and two of the minor signs for clinical diagnosis of AIDS.

Major signs:

- Weight loss or abnormally slow growth
- Chronic diarrhoea, for more than one month
- Prolonged fever, for more than one month

Minor signs:

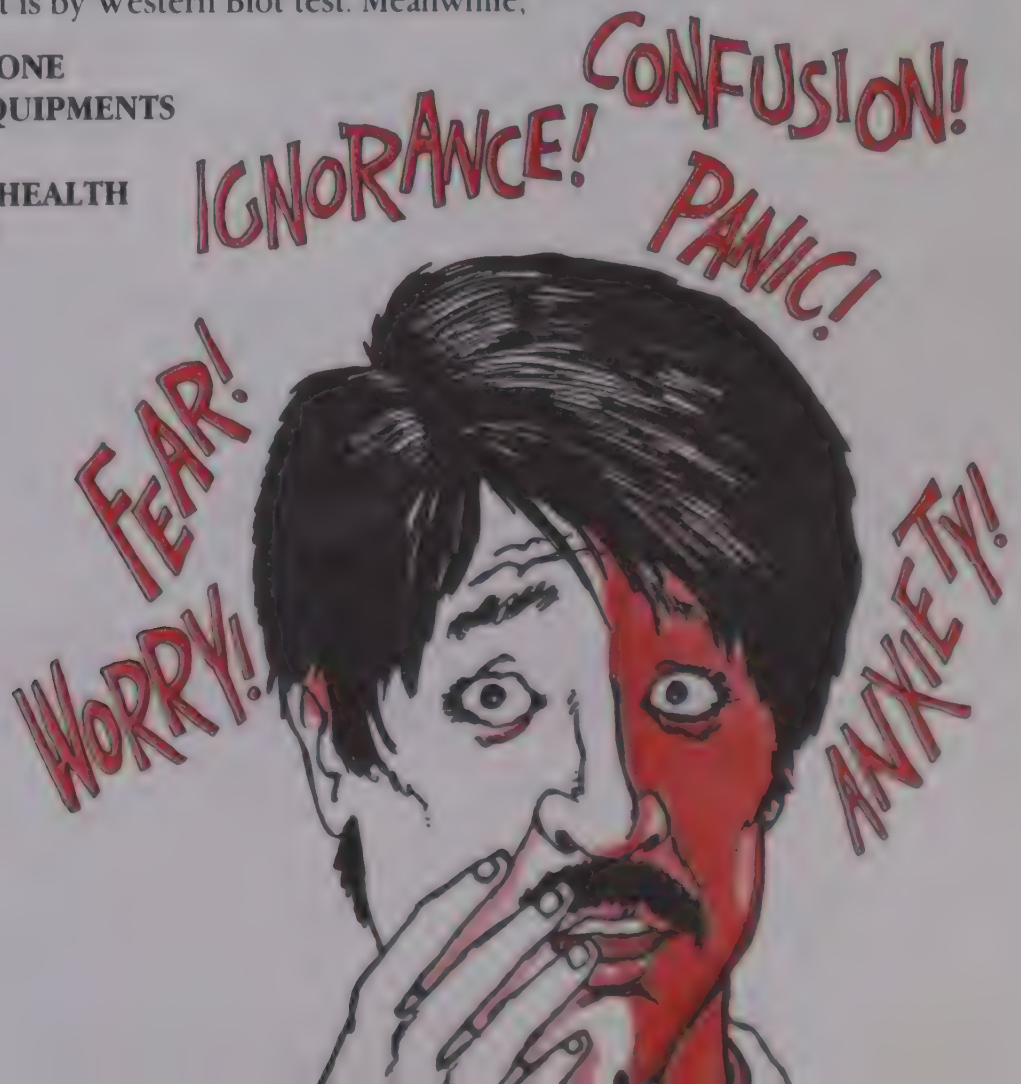
- Generalised Lymphadenopathy (enlargement of lymph glands)
- Oro-pharyngeal candidiasis (fungus infection in mouth and throat)
- Repeated common infections such as otitis media, (ear infection), pharyngitis
- Persistent cough
- Generalised dermatitis (general skin disease/infection)
- Confirmed maternal HIV infection

How can I be sure I do not have HIV in my body?

If you have any reason to think you have been exposed to HIV infection go and see a doctor or a health worker or a counsellor. They will answer your questions and give you correct information and advice.

There is a special blood test, called ELISA test. This test will indicate if you have HIV in your body. Confirmatory test is by Western Blot test. Meanwhile,

- STOP HAVING SEX WITH ANYONE
- STOP SHARING INJECTING EQUIPMENTS
- DO NOT DONATE BLOOD
- DO NOT PANIC - CONSULT A HEALTH WORKER OR A COUNSELLOR



08 What can I do to keep HIV away?

**PRACTISING
LOW RISK
BEHAVIOUR-
GATEWAY
TO HIV
FREE LIFE**

Ask Yourself:

- Do I have any habit that increases the risk of HIV infection
- How sure can I be of my sexual partner?
- Could he/she have had sex with someone who has been infected
- Could my sexual partner have had a partner who used IV drugs?
- Has my sexual partner used IV drugs or has received a blood transfusion recently?

Because your questions may not be easily answered... you will have to make a choice. You can practice such behaviours which do not allow HIV infection to be transmitted.

IF YOU ARE A SEXUALLY ACTIVE PERSON REVIEW YOUR SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

The only sure way to avoid getting HIV (through sex) is:

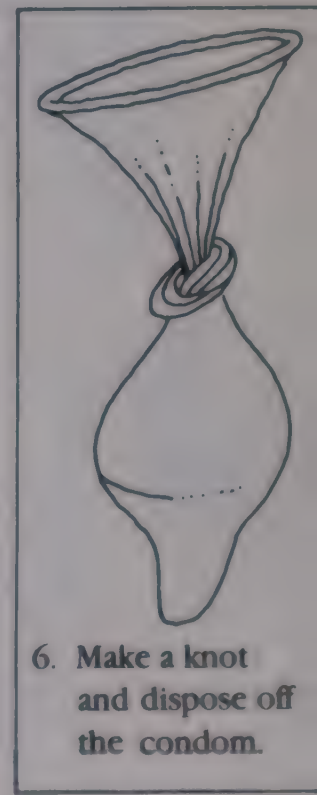
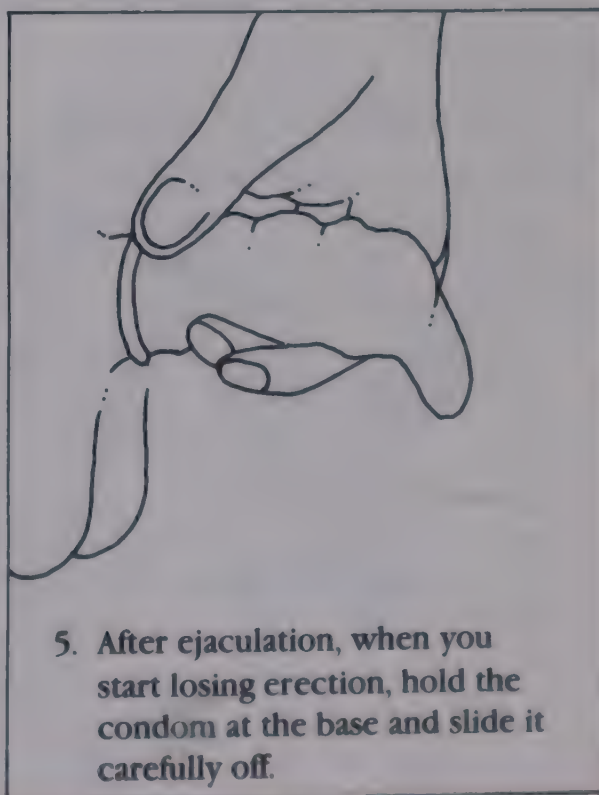
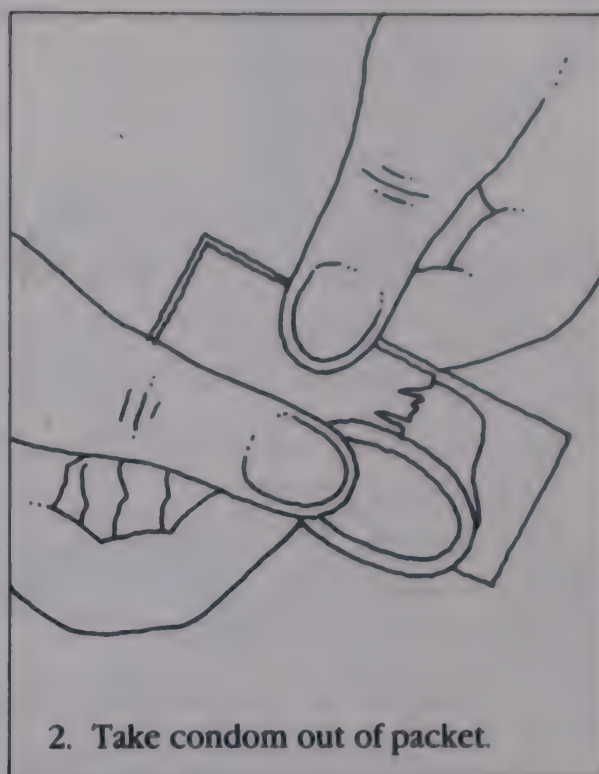
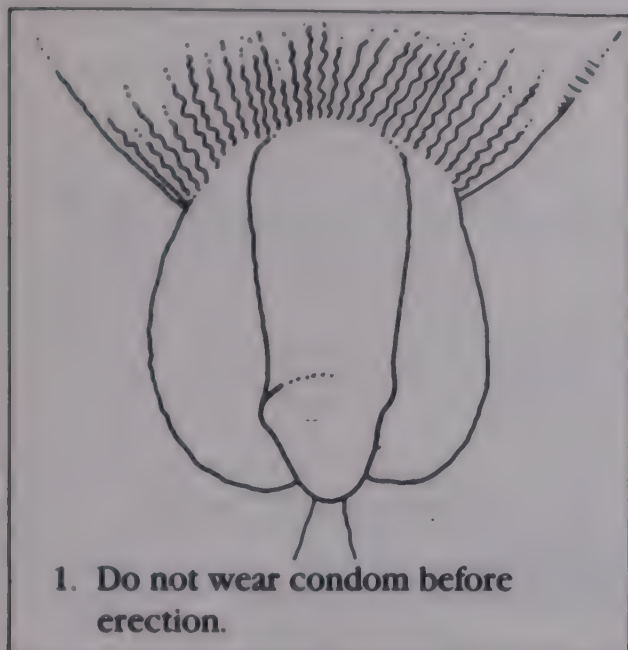
If Unmarried:

- Avoid sex till you get married
- If sexually active, non-penetrative sex is the only guarantee of no risk, so explore alternative ways of "safe sex" such as massaging, caressing, kissing or (mutual) masturbation
- If you must have sex, limit to only one faithful sexual partner to reduce your chance of being exposed to HIV
- Do not forget to use a new condom (Nirodh etc.) properly every time you have sex from START to FINISH

If married:

- The only sure way to avoid getting HIV (through sex) is to have sex with one partner for life and be loyal to him/her
- If you must have sex with anyone other than your faithful partner you are at risk of catching HIV. To reduce this risk, use a new condom properly and carefully everytime you have sex
- Both men and women should take responsibility for using condoms even if another form of birth control is used

Steps of condom use:



NEVER USE A CONDOM TWICE!

09 Safe sex by use of condom?

**DECREASE
THE RISK OF
INFECTION
INCREASE
PLEASURE
USE
CONDOM
SENSE**

Use a condom properly everytime you have any penetrative sexual contact. It helps protect you and your partner.

Note: 1) Read the directions on the condom packet
2) Do not forget to check for the expiry date

Where can I get a condom from?

You can get condoms:

- Free of charge at Government Hospitals or clinics
- For a small charge from private Chemists (Pharmacy) or from other stores like local grocery or panwallahs

But why should I use a condom when I am using oral pills/spermicide?

Using pills or spermicide may help you to plan your family or prevent you from unwanted pregnancy but they cannot protect you from HIV infection.

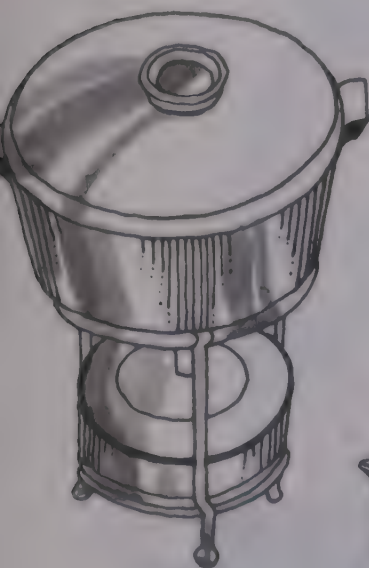
10 Do not inject drugs:

- STOP injecting DRUGS, it is safer to take drugs by inhaling, smoking, or swallowing them to avoid HIV infection/AIDS
- If you are already taking drugs, have guts to say NO to drugs or seek advice from a counsellor meanwhile,
- Drugs such as "Smack", "Charas", "Heroin" or "Morphine" etc. can seriously harm your mind and body

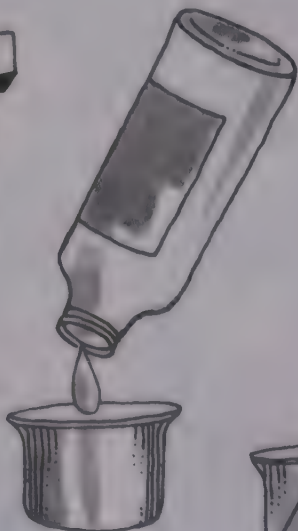
**STOP SHARING INJECTING
EQUIPMENTS
WITH OTHERS.
SHARING NEEDLES
AND SYRINGES IS
JUST ASKING
FOR HIV/AIDS**

If you are already injecting drugs into your body:
Clean and disinfect injecting needles and syringes,
thoroughly.

You can easily clean your needles &
syringes by any of these two methods
given below:



Boiling for
twenty minutes.



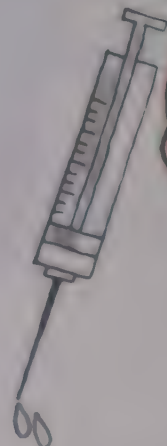
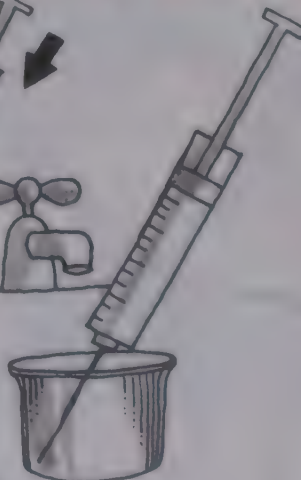
Bleach or
Washing up
liquid.



Cleaning by
bleach solution.



Flush
2-3 times.



Repeat steps
2 and 3.

Watch out for those intoxicants:

Though they don't spread HIV by themselves,
they lower inhibitions leaving you more vulnerable to unprotected
sex and use of intravenous drugs which are high risk.



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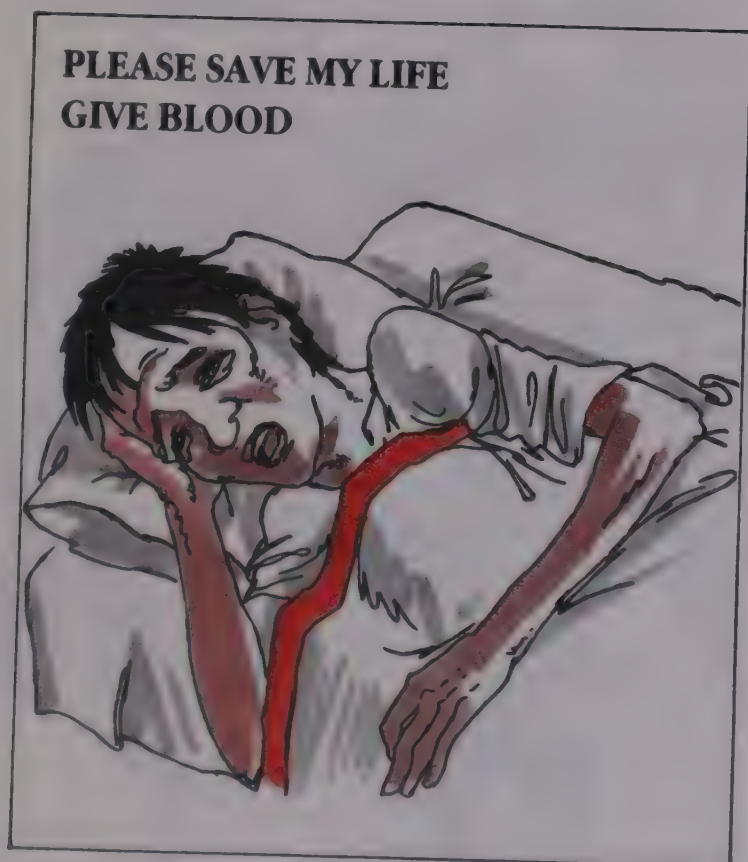
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11 Safe blood for transfusion

Should you or your relatives or friends require blood transfusions, seek blood from relatives or friends. They are safer than buying blood from professional donors.

If not, insist on the Hospital/Nursing Home on using blood/blood products that they have already tested for HIV. Every bag or bottle should have this information labelled on it.

What about donating blood?



ILL BOY



BLOOD DONOR

DONATE BLOOD. YOU CANNOT GET HIV BY DONATING BLOOD. ALL EQUIPMENTS USED ARE STERILE AND USED ONLY ONCE. Motivate more people for voluntary blood donation. Voluntary blood donation will reduce professional blood donors donating infected blood.

What can you do?

As an individual you can make all the difference. Act now and not wait till HIV which causes AIDS infects one of us, our friends or a family member.

**Spread the message of HIV infection and AIDS.
Help educate others including teenagers about
AIDS.**



**Stay safe,
do not
play sex**

Share information about low risk behaviour

Low risk behaviours are:

- Safe Sex
- Safe blood and blood products transfusion
- Safe injecting practices and not sharing injecting equipments

Treat people with AIDS with compassion, not discrimination

They need our care and protection. They can improve their life by our support and prevent HIV to spread.

Our approach — public health must be protected and simultaneously human rights must be respected.



Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) is a non-profit registered society formed by the federation of Voluntary Health Associations organised at the level of States and Union Territories. VHAI links over 3000 grassroots-level organisations and community health programmes spread across the country.

VHAI's primary objectives are to promote community health, social justice and human rights related to the provision and distribution of health services in India.

VHAI fulfils these objectives through campaigning, policy research, and press and parliament advocacy; through need-based training and provision of information and documentation services; and through production and distribution of innovative health education materials and packages, in the form of print and audiovisuals, for a wide spectrum of users — both urban and rural.

VHAI tries to ensure that a people-oriented health policy is formulated and effectively implemented. It also endeavours to sensitise the larger public towards a scientific attitude to health, without ignoring India's natural traditions and resources.



VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Tong Swasthya Bhavan,

40 Institutional Area, Near Qutab Hotel

New Delhi 110 016, INDIA

Phones: 668071, 668072, 655871, 652953, 665018

Fax: 91-11-6853 708 Grams: VOLHEALTH, N.D. 16.